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Question Time: Should we explore smart guns?

Could these be a solution to our crisis?

By Rob Burgess
Tribune night editor

[**Editor's note:** To participate in future queries, keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook accounts.]

When President Barack Obama issued his recent executive orders on gun violence, he "directed the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security to conduct or sponsor research into gun safety technology," according to a Jan. 4 press release. "The president has also directed the departments to review the availability of smart gun technology on a regular basis, and to explore potential ways to further its use and development to more broadly improve gun safety."

Though not yet available for purchase, smart guns are increasingly being talked about as a possible solution.

"The most popular form is fingerprint recognition, which requires gun owners to press their finger somewhere on the weapon (often the grip) to fire. Other brands use radio-frequency identification (RFID) chips that force gun owners to wear a special watch, bracelet or ring if they want the

weapon to fire," reported Jeff Stone of The International Business Times on Thursday. "Both technologies aim to prevent young children, criminals and anyone else not authorized to use a weapon from discharging it, either on purpose or by accident."

So, we wanted to know: "What do you think of this technology?"

Your answers

"Well, seeing how my iPhone hardly ever recognizes my fingerprint, I'd say the technology doesn't really exist." — **Erik Dukes**

"Nice, for the rich people, who will be the only ones who can afford it." —

Nanci Loveless Burns

"I'll talk about it after January 2017. Next subject." — **Chuck Woolley**

Our answers

"A smart gun is good. A smart gun owner is better." — **Steve Mullen**

"I know many people who are proponents of the right to bear arms — and they also advocate for responsible handgun use. One was telling me about a holster he'd like to buy that incorporates fingerprint-reading technology that keeps anyone but the owner from being able to unholster the gun. A quick Google search shows a model that retails for close to \$400. Some solutions already exist for those who decide to spend the money on such

precautions, and more are undoubtedly in development to allow gun owners to incorporate fingerprint technology with the guns they already own. I doubt many gun owners would be willing to immediately replace their guns with new ones that have smart tech built in, so if gun manufacturers do pursue that route, it would take years — decades, probably — for most guns in the nation to have smart tech. Smart guns seem to me a good idea, but not especially effective in the short run, when holsters would probably do more good.” — **Sarah Einselen**

“I do think this technology has the potential to save a lot of lives if it works as advertised. I wouldn’t be willing to be one of the first ones to try it, but once the bugs are worked out it could be a game changer. Although, I just know the gun lobby is going to be against this no matter what.” — **Rob Burgess**

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